

1 Samuel 30 - Thursday, October 16th, 2014

- Two weeks ago we left David being miraculously delivered once again out of the hands of the Philistines, who he had allied himself with.
- After almost a year and a half of lying and deceiving, God puts an end to it by having the Philistines refuse David going to battle with them.
- Enter the Amalekites, whom Saul was commanded to eliminate, taking advantage of what they see as the perfect opportunity to attack.
- This because they knew it would be an opportune time given David and his men were joining the Philistines to battle against the Israelites.
- At the end of chapter 29, we saw that in addition to burning Ziklag and everything they owned, the Amalekites took their wives and children.
- This is where we now pick it up here in chapter 30, as David and his men hit rock bottom, when they realize what awaited them in Ziklag.

Charles Spurgeon had this to say concerning what awaited them, "Out of this difficulty delivered him, for the Philistine lords distrusted him, and therefore Achish sent him back to Ziklag, the city which he had allotted to him as his dwelling place; but the Lord took care to chasten him, for on his return to Ziklag a sad scene awaited him."

1 Now it happened, when David and his men came to Ziklag, on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the South and Ziklag, attacked Ziklag and burned it with fire, 2 and had taken captive the women and those who were there, from small to great; they did not kill anyone, but carried them away and went their way. 3 So David and his men came to the city, and there it was, burned with fire; and their wives, their sons, and their daughters had been taken captive.

- One has to imagine the utter shock of seeing what the Amalekites did upon their arrival at what they thought would be a welcome home.
- Moreover, they had been traveling for about three days in order to get back home, only to find this horrific scene of everything destroyed.
- If this weren't bad enough, they must have surmised that their wives and children had been taken in the absence of any bodily remains.

Of this one commentator wrote, "On the third day indicates that David and his men covered about twenty-five miles a day on the march south from Aphek to Ziklag, where they would have arrived tired, hungry and expecting all the comforts for a welcome home."

4 Then David and the people who were with him lifted up their voices and wept, until they had no more power to weep. 5 And David's two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite, had been taken captive. 6 Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.

- I don't know if it's possible to fully grasp the intensity and the enormity of verse four where we're told that they wept until they were unable.
- In other words, they had wept so bitterly that there was no longer any physical or even emotional strength left in them to continue weeping.
- I personally know what this is like in somewhat of a smaller measure when my daughter was dying, such that one can only weep so long.

- What's interesting to note is that in addition to David weeping right along with his men, he's greatly distressed because of these very men.

- The reason being is we're told they had turned against him, and were speaking of stoning him to death because they blamed him for this.

- Thankfully, David's response to this is to strengthen himself in the Lord his God. Finally, David is back after turning his back on the Lord.

- Often times God will not only bring us to the end of ourselves, He will also allow others close to us to turn against us, so we'll turn to Him.

- There does come a time in the life of a Christian when there's nobody there to encourage us as we go through those really difficult trials.

- But God! But God is always there for us to go to and find encouragement in. Such is the case with David here. Actually he had no choice.

- By that I mean the Lord brought him to the place where he had no other choice but return to the Lord, and encourage himself in the Lord.

- The question is one of how did he encourage himself in the Lord. I'm of the belief that he did so by his remembering the Word of the Lord.

- More specifically, instead of discouraging self-talk it was encouraging talk to self by reminding self of his hope in, and help from, the Lord.

Psalm 42:5 (NKJV) — 5 Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him For the help of His countenance.

Again, Spurgeon says it best this way, "God was beginning to cure his servant by a bitter dose of distress, and the evidence of the cure was that he did not encourage himself by his new friends, or by the hope of others coming; but he encouraged himself in the Lord his God. ...Some of the best talks in the world are those, which a man has with himself. He who speaks to everybody except himself is a great fool."

- Before we move on to verse seven, there's something else I want to point out, and it has to do with what I believe David came to realize.
- Let me explain, as David approached Ziklag with his men, tired and weary from the 3-day journey, he had to realize something was wrong.
- As he neared the city, there were no wives or children running to greet them, instead, only the stench of the smoke was what greeted them.

- Here's what I'm thinking, David, while utterly devastated by what had happened, actually saw the gracious and merciful hand of God in it.

- David knew that God delivered him from having to battle against his own people so as to send him back to Ziklag much earlier as a result.

- The point being, had David fought for the Philistines against the Israelites, it would have been infinitely worse by the time he had returned.

7 Then David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, "Please bring the ephod here to me." And Abiathar brought the ephod to David. 8 So David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I pursue this troop? Shall I overtake them?" And He answered him, "Pursue, for you shall surely overtake them and without fail recover all."

- What David does here is textbook when it comes to encouraging one's self in the Lord in that it will lead to one also inquiring of the Lord.
- Be that as it may, what's even more textbook is God still hears us and responds to us when He could arguably be justified in not doing so.
- In other words, God could have said to David, you're a day late and a dollar short so to speak. You should have called upon me long ago.

9 So David went, he and the six hundred men who were with him, and came to the Brook Besor, where those stayed who were left behind. 10 But David pursued, he and four hundred men; for two hundred stayed behind, who were so weary that they could not cross the Brook Besor.

- At the risk of an oversimplification I see this as a three-step process of one returning to the Lord. First they strengthen themselves in the Lord.

- Second, they enquire of the Lord, and third, they step out in faith trusting in the promises from the Lord, which is what David is doing here.
- David has not only heard from the Lord, he's heeding that which he's been given by the Lord, that of the promise of victory and restoration.
- By the way, did you happen to notice that David's six hundred men are now back with him instead of wanting to kill him only moments prior.
- What has changed? I would suggest that David's men had a change of heart when they saw the change in David's heart toward the Lord.
- Now that David was back with the Lord, his men were back with him, which speaks to the importance of and example in godly leadership.
- Also I find it most interesting how that two hundred of David's six hundred men were so weary that they could not cross the Brook Besor.
- Here's why, David still heeded the word of the Lord and stood on the promise from the Lord, even though he only had two thirds of his men.
- The point being is that this could have easily discouraged and even derailed David, but instead, he was not shaken or moved because of it.

Charles Spurgeon offers some great insight on this writing, "But mark this, he was not delivered without further trial ... Many a leader would have given up the chase with one out of three of his troop in hospital, but David pursued with his reduced force. When God means to bless us, he often takes away a part of the little strength we thought we had. We did not think our strength equal to the task, and the Lord takes away a portion even of the little power we had. Our God does not fill till he has emptied. Two hundred men must be sent away from David's side before God could give him victory ... Expect then, O troubled one, that you will be delivered, but know that your sorrow may yet deepen, that you may have all the greater joy by-and-by."

11 Then they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David; and they gave him bread and he ate, and they let him drink water. 12 And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs and two clusters of raisins. So when he had eaten, his strength came back to him; for he had eaten no bread nor drunk water for three days and three nights. 13 Then David said to him, "To whom do you belong, and where are you from?" And he said, "I am a young man from Egypt, servant of an Amalekite; and my master left me behind, because three days ago I fell sick. 14 We made an invasion of the southern area of the Cherethites, in the territory which belongs to Judah, and of the southern area of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire." 15 And David said to him, "Can you take me down to this troop?" So he said, "Swear to me by God that you will neither kill me nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will take you down to this troop."

- I absolutely love it when God does this! This is what you call a divine appointment, however it's unclear if David knows this at this juncture.
- Actually, that makes this even more interesting in the sense that David, like the Good Samaritan is helping someone for nothing in return.
- Little does he know that in so doing, God is going to use this Egyptian to lead him to the Amalekites in order to fulfill his promise to David.

16 And when he had brought him down, there they were, spread out over all the land, eating and drinking and dancing, because of all the great spoil which they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah. 17 Then David attacked them from twilight until the evening of the next day. Not a man of them escaped, except four hundred young men who rode on camels and fled. 18 So David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away, and David rescued his two wives. 19 And nothing of theirs was lacking, either small or great, sons or daughters, spoil or anything which they had taken from them; David recovered all. 20 Then David took all the flocks and herds they had driven before those other livestock, and said, "This is David's spoil."

- I believe that God gave David the wisdom and the strategy to attack the Amalekites when he did because they would have been hung over.
- God gave David the victory over them, and allowed him to take back everything they had taken from him, because he inquired of the Lord.
- I can't help but wonder what David must be thinking right about now. Is he remorseful that it had to come to all this for him to come back?

21 Now David came to the two hundred men who had been so weary that they could not follow David, whom they also had made to stay at the Brook Besor. So they went out to meet David and to meet the people who were with him. And when David came near the people, he greeted them. 22 Then all the wicked and worthless men of those who went with David answered and said, "Because they did not go with us, we will not give them any of the spoil that we have recovered, except for every man's wife and children, that they may lead them away and depart." 23 But David said, "My brethren, you shall not do so with what the LORD has given us, who has preserved us and delivered into our hand the troop that came against us. 24 For who will heed you in this matter? But as his part is who goes down to the battle, so shall his part be who stays by the supplies; they shall share alike." 25 So it was, from that day forward; he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel to this day. 26 Now when David came to Ziklag, he sent some of the spoil to the elders of Judah, to his friends, saying, "Here is a present for you from the spoil of the enemies of the LORD"—27 to those who were in Bethel, those who were in Ramoth of the South, those who were in Jattir, 28 those who were in Aroer, those who were in Siphmoth, those who were in Eshtemoa, 29 those who were in Rachal, those who were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, those who were in the cities of the Kenites, 30 those who were in Hormah, those who were in Chorashan, those who were in Athach, 31 those who were in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men were accustomed to rove.

- The chapter comes to an end with our hero David making it very clear in no uncertain terms, he's back online with his God and his people.
- It's evidenced by what he does in yet another demonstration of his godly character when he shows compassion on those who are weary.
- While David would be considered as one doing great things for the Lord, he becomes a type of the Lord in sharing the spoil from victory.

I'll bring it to a close by sharing with you what one commentator had to say about this, "David sent spoil from the battle to more than 13 cities. Obviously, there was spoil to spare from the battle. In this David is a picture of his greater Son, Jesus Christ. When Jesus triumphed on the cross He won the greatest battle and He had "spoil to share." He shared the spoil with His people, as it says in Ephesians 4:7–8: But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men." Jesus has spoil from His victory to give you! David is a remarkable picture of Jesus in this chapter. Note these five points of association: We are like David's men, David is like Jesus. We are like the weary ones left behind, David is like Jesus. We are like the Egyptian slave, David is like Jesus. We are like the spoil David recovered, David is like Jesus. We are like the elders of Judah, and David is like Jesus.